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b) Marginal rites.

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The newly circumcised boy is now to be three months secluded from society in the "yard of mysteries" called *sungi*. Let us first describe this lodge, and we shall see what his occupations will be during this time of trial.

1. *The Sungi.*

(See the accompanying plan of the lodge).

The whole sungi is surrounded by a high fence of thorny branches. This is a sign that all that goes on inside must be

Circumcised boys near Shilurane. Photo A. Junod.

kept secret. No one who is not initiated can be allowed to see it, especially women. This fence is extended at the entrance so as to form a long avenue by which one penetrates into the yard. Then the way of access continues between twelve poles arranged in pairs (2). The inmates alone have the right to take the road between the poles. Circumcised visitors (uncircumcised would not be admitted) go round them and cross the road five times so as to reach the men's entrance at the end (3),

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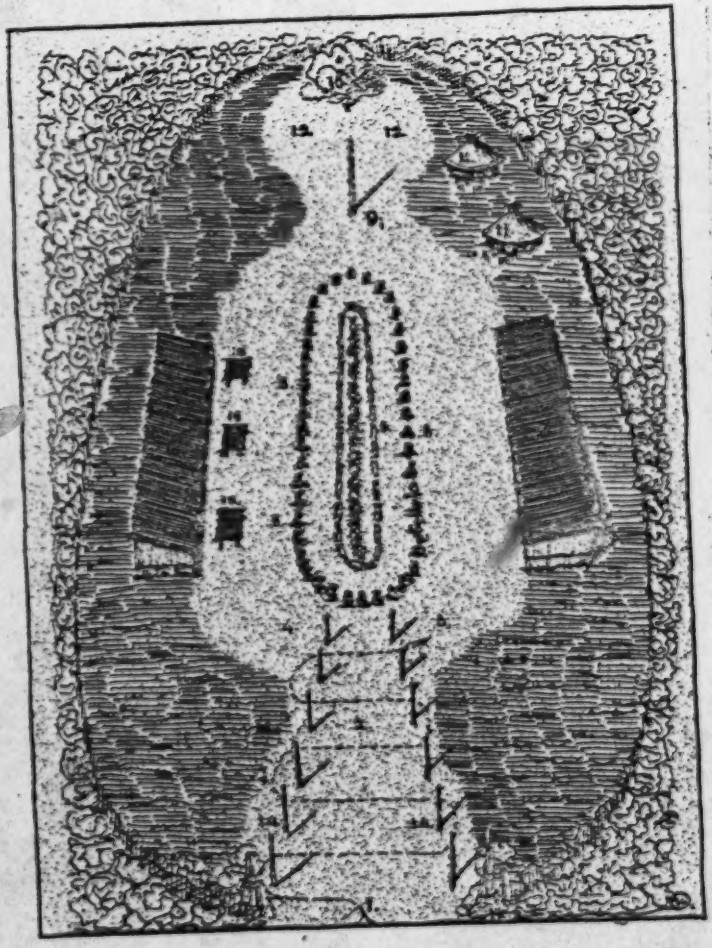
and not the candidates' gate, which is on the opposite side (4). Further on is the central court of the sungi, with the long fireplace built with stones and called the Elephant (5) round which the boys must sit (8), warming their right hips at the fire. The uterine



Plan of the circumcision lodge. *Drawn by J. Watts.*

[644] 881 349 nephew of the chief, the son of his sister, who takes precedence in all the rites, and who is the first to be circumcised, sits on a special stone with the others behind him. He is called the *Hwatye*. Near the fireside are the tables made of hurdles of reeds on which the porridge of the boys is served every day (15). The central court is occupied on both sides by two square sheds hastily and roughly built, the one on the right (7) being the hut of the shepherds and of the men, the one on the left (6) the hut of the circumcised. The soil is not smeared in these houses. Some of the men also sleep in separate huts behind (11). It is behind the Elephant that the big Mulagaru pole will be raised at the close of the school (9). Further at the back of the sungi is the place of the formulae where the boys are taught (12). A tree sometimes grows in the middle and the instructor climbs up it to impart his teaching (10)!

I have drawn this plan of the sungi with the help of Viguet. Having never seen it with my own eyes, I cannot guarantee that it does not omit many details... But it is correct as a whole.

881 The inmates of the lodge fall into three categories : 1. the " bukwera " viz. the troop of candidates who are to be initiated ; 2. the shepherds (barisi or psitjiba, the boys who light (tjibela) the fire of the Elephant) who waken the circumcised in the morning, accompany them on their hunting trips, watch them when they eat, etc. 3. The grown up men who have volunteered to come and stay in the sungi during the whole school. They eat the flesh of the animals killed by the bukwera, carve pestles, weave baskets, enjoy themselves, and form the council which looks after the well-being of the school. Amongst them are the so-called father and mother of the Ngoma, two men who are specially in charge of the school. The " father " has a difficult task ; he must keep discipline, administer punishment, etc. These two men are paid, as are also the Lion-men and the Manyabe. The Manyabe is the great doctor of the school. He has poured his charms on the fence to protect the lodge against wizards. He does not stay in the sungi, but can be called at any time to administer medicine to the boys who are unwell or whose wounds do not heal properly.